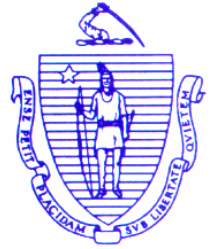




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**MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES
ANNOUNCES NEW REGULATIONS FOR 2003.**

At the March 6, 2003 monthly business meeting of the state's Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFC), new regulations were enacted affecting commercial cod, black sea bass, tautog and lobster fisheries as well as recreational tautog fishing. These issues were discussed at February 3-4 public hearings and will be in effect on March 28, 2003.

1) Commercial cod regulations were amended that prohibit the mutilation of cod in such a way as to interfere with or affect a proper or adequate measurement of fish (322 CMR 6.03):

- (a) Commercial Fishery Cod Limit. The trip limits established in 322 CMR 6.03(5) shall be determined by the weight of whole, whole-gutted, or gilled fish.
- (b) Exceptions for possession of cod parts. For purposes of determining weights for trip limits as established by 322 CMR 6.03(b), the weight of fillets, except as permitted in 322 CMR 8.08(1), will be multiplied by 3, and the weight of headless whole-gutted cod will be multiplied by 1.25. The weights of cheeks removed from cod heads and cod gonads consistent with 322 CMR 6.03(b) shall be exempt from the possession limits.
- (c) Prohibition. It shall be unlawful for a commercial fisherman to mutilate any cod in such a way as to interfere with or affect a proper or adequate measurement of the fish.

2) Black Sea Bass trip limits and seasons were enacted to administer the state's commercial quota (322 CMR 6.28):

- (3) Black Sea Bass Commercial Fishery Possession Limits. The commercial black sea bass quota is managed with seasonal and gear-specific trip limits, no-fishing days and seasonal allocations of the quota split between January 1 – July 31 and August 1 – December 31.
 - (a) January 1 – April 30. It is unlawful for commercial fishermen to land or possess more than 100 lbs. of black sea bass during a 24-hour day.
 - (b) May 1 – May 22; June 1 – July 31. During a 24-hour day, it is unlawful for commercial fishermen to land or possess more than 500 lbs. of black sea bass in the directed sea bass pot fishery and weir fishery, 200 lbs of black sea bass for all other gear types, or 100 lbs. in the commercial lobster trap fishery. It is unlawful for commercial fishermen to land or possess any black sea bass from May 23 through May 31 or once the Director has determined that 50% of the Massachusetts commercial fishery quota has been reached during this period. The landing and/or possession of black sea bass on Fridays and Saturdays is prohibited.
 - (c) August 1 – December 31. During a 24-hour day, it is unlawful for commercial fishermen to land or possess more than 500 lbs. of black sea bass in the directed sea bass pot fishery and weir fishery, 200 lbs of black sea bass for all other gear types, or 100 lbs. in the commercial lobster fishery during a 24-hour day. It is unlawful for commercial fishermen to land or possess black sea

bass once the Director has determined that 100% of the annual Massachusetts commercial fishery quota has been reached. The landing and/or possession of black sea bass on Fridays and Saturdays is prohibited.

3) Tautog was approved (for 2004) as a quota-managed species thus requiring dealers to report all tautog purchases from commercial fishermen (322 CMR 7.02):

Quota Managed Species means those species managed by DMF with annual commercial quotas pursuant to interstate and/or federal management plans. Quota managed species include striped bass, summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, spiny dogfish, squid, bluefish, horseshoe crabs and tautog.

4) The recreational tautog possession limit was lowered from 6 fish to 3 fish in order to comply with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Interstate Fishery Management Plan (IFMP) (322 CMR 8.06).

5) Commercial Lobster regulations were amended:

- **V-notch language** that will bring Massachusetts into compliance for the Area 1 commercial lobster fishery with the ASMFC IFMP for American lobster (322 CMR 6.02). This replaces the existing regulation and applies state-wide (322 CMR 6.02):
 - (3) **V-notched Female Lobster Protection.**
 - (a) **Definitions.** For the purpose of 322 CMR 6.02, the following words shall have the following meanings:
 - V-notched Female Lobster means any female lobster bearing a v- notch on the right flipper adjacent to the middle flipper or any female lobster that is mutilated in a manner that could hide, obscure, or obliterate such a mark. The right flipper will be examined when the underside of the lobster is down and its tail is toward the person making the determination.
 - V-notch means a "V" shaped notch, which has been carved by means of a sharp bladed instrument, at least ¼ inch and not greater than ½ inch in depth and tapering to a sharp point in the flipper next top and to the right of the center flipper as viewed from the rear of the female lobster when the underside of the lobster is down.
 - (b) It is prohibited and unlawful for any person to possess any v-notched female lobsters.
 - (c) Commercial fishermen fishing in Area 1 as defined in 322 CMR 6.33 or authorized to fish in Area 1, shall carve a "v-shaped notch" as described in 322 CMR 6.02(3)(a) into the right middle flipper of all egg bearing female lobsters.
- **Minimum size in Area 2 was increased to 3 11/32"** effective March 14, 2003 (322 CMR 6.01) and **to 3 3/8" effective July 1, 2003** as mandated by the ASMFC (322 CMR 6.01). Note that a previously approved minimum size increase for lobster in Area 3 and Outer Cape Cod to 3 11/32" will also become effective on July 1, 2003.

For more information please contact *Marine Fisheries* at 617.626.1520
or visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.